

On the Ecology of the Ixitxachitl

"There's no debate about how to say the name! Don't be absurd." - Nenemith, Sage

Nomenclature: Ixitxachitl, Intelligent rays, Demon Rays, Devil fish

Ixitxachitl is pronounced:

- ish-it-SHACH-itl ([Wikipedia](#))
- iks-it-ZATCH-i-til ([Wikipedia](#))
- ik-zit-zah-chih-tull ([Wikipedia](#))
- iks-it-ZAK-itl ([Gen Con Contest](#))
- iks-it-SHAK-it-ul ([Gen Con Contest](#))
- ih-SHIK-sha-chi-tul ([Gen Con Contest](#))
- iks-iks-a-CHIH-tul ([Gen Con Contest](#))
- ick-ZIT-sah-chittle (Dragon magazine #85)



Description: Evil intelligent clerical manta rays

Things that are known:

- They are highly intelligent and wield malicious divine powers
- They live underwater
- They are shaped similar to manta rays
- Their lairs are often hidden quite well
- Members appear to be vampiric in nature

Rumors and other whispers in the dark:

- They have their magical powers, because they sacrifice to the old and forgotten gods
- They sacrifice not just the flesh of men and treasure, but also sculpture and metal-works. In times of scarcity, they must occasionally sacrifice one of their own number

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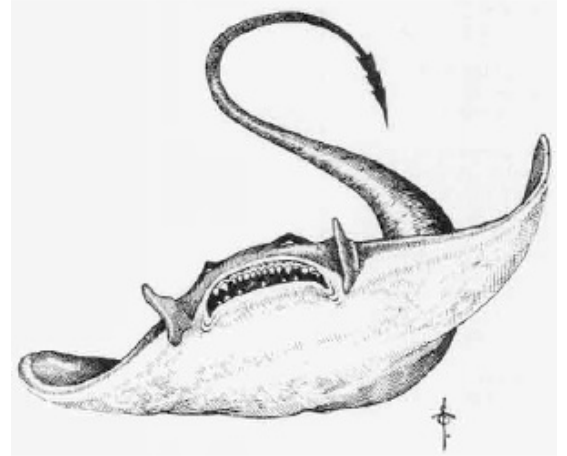
- Evil is subjective. There are greater things below in the deeps that thirst and hunger. If their need becomes too great, they could consume all life. The Ixixachitl serve a need, feeling the god-beasts and leviathans of the sea, keeping them in sated torpor. The lives sacrificed are for a greater purpose
- They are particularly deadly to rangers. Crikey!
- Each carries an energy, when more than 20 gather the barriers between the prime material and the realms of the old gods weaken, and they feed their gods directly by draining the life from those they face
- They are mercenary, hiring out their services to any deity meeting their horrific demands.
- They dislike having their name mispronounced
- They kill and sacrifice opponents because they desire to turn their life energy into magic items
- Vampiric Ixixachitl are conduits for the Great Administrator, She Who Waits Beneath The Sands. They gather blood and funnel it to her vats, to be turned into pucks, shaped like pontefract cakes.
- Any who consume these pucks is turned into a Wooper (an infant Ixixachitl)
- The Ixixachitl are actually just sentient coral. They aren't evil, but seeking revenge for the destruction of coral by surface dwellers. They are focused on finding a way to flood the world
- Ixixachitl like poetry, haunting organ music, and whale song
- Ixixachitl can be tanned into scrolls. These scrolls allow the spell on them to be reused up to 1d12 times, but there remains a small (~5%) chance that the spell will be changed from whatever it is to summoning vampiric Ixixachitls
- Ixixachitl have one six fingered hand on the end of their long, prehensile tail
- The vampiric Ixixachitls vary in size. The smaller they are, the more of a knack they have for traps and mimicry. They will often disguise themselves as treasure in order to access to secret places. They favor disguising themselves as one of the following: Bag of holding that can hold up to 2000 coins. After that, it explosively vomits them out. Tricorn hat, Book dust jacket, Girdle of uncomfortable looks
- Ixixachitl believe sea cows are sacred manifestations of their deities and must never be harmed
- Vorpil Ixixachitls have poisonous spines on their tails. On a natural 20, the spine pierces the heart of their enemy, causing instant death
- They create forbidden alien intelligences as recreation
- They are arrogant and self-important to a fault. Anything that does not concern their world is of no importance at all to them



- In the deep heavy ocean trenches, portals are refined by the crushing pressures of the deep. The dark intelligences of that place send their scouting spells through to see what the thin space is like, alien astronomers exploring our airy realm. Their magic is more durable than our weak magic. If the portal closes before the spell returns, it cures taking on intelligence and independent life. It maintains a thread of connection and can draw energy from its ancient source. The Ixixachitl have not forgotten their original purpose, they secretly labor to build chambers for when their masters arrive to claim this realm
- They worship dark gods like Demogorgon
- Ixixachitl worship the death cult of Skulli, the six-flippered manta of destruction
- Ixixachitl explosively expel their guts to entangle foes. This is why Ixixachitl become vampiric, they need living blood to regrow their intestines
- Ixixachitl implant their eggs in the posteriors of their victims. There the eggs hatch into little mantas that eventually emerge from the victim's mouth
- Ixixachitl aren't aquatic. They are amphibious. Out of water they are called cloakers
- Stupid wizards. Valek the sea wizard wanted a magical cloak. He wanted it to see and warn him of incoming attacks. He wanted it to channel divine magic to heal him and refill spells. He wanted it to help him swim like a creature of the sea. Imagine his surprise when it grew weary of his endless pedantic speechifying, stabbed him, and swam off. It dug into the glimmering cosmic connection infused by Valek, found a patron and had but one wish. A mate
- Male Ixixachitl paint their flippers with gaudy patterns of green, red, and mauve to woo females. They also enjoy wearing kilts
- They are not cruel. They just don't understand that other creatures besides Ixixachitl are sentient. They treat the whole world as if it exists for their use and pleasure
- Lochsbaed, a cruel sea goddess, subjects all sahuagin clerics to judgement when they begin to attract attention with their spell demands. The failures become Ixixachitl, scales cast from her divine body
- Despite looking like manta rays, Ixixachitl actually taste like beef
- This is true, and the Ixixachitl are literal scales, seeking to construct her body on earth. When a critical mass of failure is reached, she will be drawn to the frame of her scales and her avatar will cleanse the earth, boiling them with blood and death
- When the moon is full the Ixixachitl can fly through the air in bubbles of suspended water. This makes them more difficult to hit



- They originally are space creatures and came here clinging on the hulls of spelljammers
- They dissolve into hundreds of pearls when slain
- They are parasites of the cosmic life force, sucking divine energy. The most refined become vampiric. Every god wants them killed, but a cult is studying them to learn how they steal energy from the gods without worship
- The vampiric Ixixachitl are actually ancestors, the source of their clerical spells, and summonable through pheromonal and ink gestures from the Great Swimming Grounds beyond to act as champions and protectors
- A defected drow faction moved to the deep sea, worshipping an ancient monstrosity they crafted with atrocity and deep magic. They worship it, granting it power and it flakes off Ixixachitl like dead skin. Now, however, it favors the Ixixachitl more than the drow
- A city of bloodthirsty killer cultists worshipping evil was flooded by a group of powerful adventurers. However, some were saved with new bodies granted by underwater darkness spirits
- The Ixixachitl do not serve gods. They take divine power from lost underwater temples. The vampiric ones serve as hosts for stolen divine sparks
- There is a caste of four-armed engineers and builders among the mantis folk called the Fixixachitl
- They are symbiotic with evil halflings that live on tropical islands. They surf the large ones, use the small ones as frisbees for sports. The dead Ixixachitl are made into hide shields and armor. Their spines are wonderful spear tips and daggers. What's the exchange? The halflings make sacrifices at a dark altar. All Ixixachitl magic is fueled by that altar
- The Ixixachitl are pure vegetarian nature-lovers. Their clerics are really druids and the 'vampiric' Ixixachitl use mouth daggers to perform sacrifices to balance the ocean
- Ixixachitl are hunted by the penguin folk to be made into cloaks and jackets of warmth and spell resistance
- An aboleth from the elemental plane of water (or more likely, mucus) crafted a magic item that devours its victims. When successful, they are transformed and excreted out onto the prime material as Ixixachitl. The aboleth does this without concern but the thought of destroying the item might appeal to mortals
- They are obsessed with acquiring slaves that can function underwater
- But although they can raise dead, they are unable to control them, due to the enmity of the gods of death (e.g. Orcus)
- Ixixachitl are the larval stage of the space manta, sailing through the folded planes of the multiverse, spreading their dark blood cult to primitive worlds



- The vampiric liches of Sonburnne wanted to invade their elven rivals across the sea. However the sea was too dangerous to sail, the elven navy prepared with magic and arms for every incursion. They experimented with various options, transforming soldiers into rays, even transforming some of their own vampiric number. They eventually abandoned the plan and the tests, discarding them into the ocean. Some lived. They blame the elves
- Riverine Ixixachitl enslave elementals to carve maze like branching canyons and canals in which they raise their young
- For the mermaid festival the princess trained her ray friends to form a bubble and force out water to reduce the pressure. She would show off a hot air balloon underwater and use it to sing her solo. But an evil sea witch had cursed her rays. As they approached the crowd, they turned black and scattered, stabbing and casting and sucking. The problem was solved, but the sea witches achieved great fame as a result. All the other witches wanted to know the curse, and the witch was able to sell it and retire in style. Enough castings have assured the remains drift around the sea, forming a people of her own. A few have begun to question where the witch got her curse
- The Ixixachitl are not sea creatures at all. They live in a city on the dark side of the moon, travelling to the sea on moonbeams for their coming of age rituals
- The truth of their origin is that they are simple shed skin from greater evil gods, who would sooner invent a creature to eat them than listen to their endless pleas
- Dried Ixixachitl brains are used to make the traditional elven soup of wisdom which grants a bonus to intelligence and wisdom. With each serving you risk addiction
- The females breed annually and are seeking to improve the race by engaging in a selective breeding program
- The Zzar wizard house was trying to build a godzilla-class undead monster. However the tank began to bloat and rot. They repurposed local rays to eat flesh once it was ripe, but the profound necromantic energies had unpredictable effects. Not only did some of them become vampiric, but they began to grow a vague malign intelligence. One of the Zzar necromancers staged a coup using these as foot soldiers, then using the brainjuicer increased the intelligence of his minion. It worked too well. They ate him and escaped. It has been speculated that they continue to have the goal of building a leviathan of the deep to rampage across the surface
- They come from one of the seas of the moon or from within the great reservoir inside it
- Certain varieties have adapted to thrive in sewers

- Ixixachitl are forbidden from dealing the killing blow to a creature. This is why they swarm, because there is some question as to who is the killer. A lone Ixixachitl will prefer to injure and leave a target bleeding. Vampiric Ixixachitl are created when they knowingly take the life of a victim.
- Vampiric Ixixachitl are treated with suspicion by other Ixixachitl and are worshiped by Kua-toa
- Aberrant mermen or triton mages have grafted Ixixachitl to their backs, learning to adopt either form and increase the arcane powers they wield
- Powerful Ixixachitl know the spells *Desalination*, *Wall of Coral*, and *Squirming Doom*
- The name Ixixachitl is a cruel joke played on outsiders, seeking to twist their tongue into perfidious knots. The malicious creatures have a different name for themselves
- The Ixixachitl grow an extra eye for every sentient creature they kill
- The Ixixachitl are not vampiric. This is poppycock based on magical thinking. Much like the mosquito, Ixixachitl females need mammalian blood to produce eggs
- The Ixixachitl believe that negative emotions are destroying the balance of nature. They seek to provoke other creatures to draw them out, this is why some Ixixachitl are vampiric. Others feel 'drained' after being drawn out. The Ixixachitl are only acting as supernatural psychotherapists. "Survivors" of Ixixachitl "attacks" report that they feel more positive and motivated about themselves and they feel less depressed or angry
- Ixixachitl may only be turned if their name is pronounced correctly



Tactics and Special Attacks:

- They will burrow underneath the sand to hide or surprise opponents
- They can swarm creatures, losing their individual attacks but doing an automatic 3d4 damage for every 3 Ixixachitl in the swarm

The ecology series is a crowdsourced series of articles, and contributors can be found on google+ under the hashtag #crowdecology. They are limited posts, but following me on G+ will allow you to see them. All artwork is credited where the artist could be found. Classic ecology articles from [Dragon magazine](#) are used both for reference and inspiration; the whole impetus of the idea was to create 'classic' ecology articles that are actually useful. [Let's Read the Monster Manual](#) by Noism's is also a source of inspiration.